

LETTERS

IN

ANSWER

TO SOME

QUERIES

Sent to the AUTHOR, concerning the genuine
Reading of the *Greek Text*,

I TIM. iii. 16,

—ΘΕΟΣ ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί.—

—GOD was manifest in the *Flesh*.—

Now first published on Occasion of Sir ISAAC NEW-
TON's Two Letters to Mr. LE CLERC, lately
published.



R O R K:

Printed by C. WARD, in *Coney-Street*, 1758.

LETTERS

IN

ANSWER

TO SOME

QUESTIONS

Sent to the AUTHOR, concerning the
Reading of the Great Texts



— GEORGE
— GOD

Now first published on Occasion of the
Two Letters to Mr. Dr. Clarke, lately
published.



Printed by C. WARD, in Good Street, 1752.



LETTERS in ANSWER to some
Queries sent to the Author, &c.

L E T T E R I.

S I R,

Sept. 23, 1738.



HAD, Yesterday, the Honour of your Letter, which I received with much Pleasure, and shall endeavour to answer the Purport of it as much to your Satisfaction as my Situation will admit of.

In respect of Manuscripts; I know of none but such as are referred to by the Authors of the several Editions of the New Testament, which I suppose to be faithfully represented in the Article in Question.

As for ancient Versions, I believe there are none (excepting two) that are more valuable than such as have already been printed or collated, or that differ considerably in any Thing, on whose Authority one may rely. The two Versions I mean, are, 1. The *Syriac*, taken from *Origen's Hexapla*, and said to be still extant, and even common enough among the *Maronites*, and other *Syrians*; which I have wished might be sought after, for I never heard that it has been yet brought entire into *Europe*. What I desired it for in particular, is in regard of the Old Testament, wherein it might be of singular Use. 2. The other Version is one of the *Ethiopic*, more valuable than that we have; which

was

was patch'd up, for want of a complete Copy, and is very inaccurate. *Ludolf* was assured of a much better Translation current enough in *Abyssinia*.— And this is what I have desired to have procured, with a Design of publishing it, as one of the most valuable ancient Versions extant; but especially, in respect of the Old Testament and the *Hebrew* Text, on many Accounts the most valuable, by reason of the great Affinity between the two Languages, and the Assistance it affords in explaining the *Hebrew*, and reconciling the *Septuagint* therewith, beyond any other Language.

I have not heard of an entire *Ethiopic* Version of the Old Testament yet brought into *Europe*, besides that mention'd by *Walton*; which, by some Accident was lost, or designedly put out of the Way, so that he was deprived of the Use and Benefit of publishing it, as he had been promised. But I am inclined to think he was misinformed; that it was not complete; and that it contained no more than what is to be found in other Copies of that Version now in *Europe*. Indeed *Wansleb*, in the Relation of his Voyage to *Egypt*, mentions an *Ethiopic* Version of the Old Testament, which one *Peter*, an *Abyssin* at *Rome*, procured for him, together with the Councils in that Language; but it does not appear from his Account of it, that it contained all the Books of the Old Testament, nor have I had Opportunity, since I read his Narrative, to enquire after it. But I conclude my Surmise, of its not being an entire Version, to be well grounded, from *Ludolf's* Account of *Ethiopic* Manuscripts, many Years after, wherein he mentions no more than the Books following, viz. The *Pentateuch*, *Joshua*, *Judges*, the four Books of *Kings*, *Isaiah*, Part of *Job*, and *Daniel*, with the printed Books of *Psalms*, *Ruth*, and four *Minor Prophets*.

Prophets. Yet as he speaks of those *unprinted*, as copied out by the Hand of *Wansleb*, from the Original in the Hospital of the *Abyssins* at *Rome*, I think that Original worth inquiring after, as probably being that which *Wansleb* mentions. But if it be the same, it contains no more than the above-recited in Manuscript, according to *Ludolf*, who saw it at *Rome*, consisting of four large Volumes.

This whole Version I made some Solicitations for procuring, if it could any where be had; but find so little Readiness to be at any Expence, in Persons from whom one might with Reason expect good Offices of so public and honourable a Concern, that I believe I shall give no farther Trouble, on that Score, to any one among us, whom I have at present any Knowledge of. ^a

But

^a After this, I had the Pleasure to be assured by our late most Reverend and Worthy Primate, of his Assistance in procuring me what I wanted, and promoting my Undertaking by a most benevolent interesting of himself in my Behalf, agreeable to the Humanity for which he was so conspicuous, and which had particularly indear'd him to the Province in general. But, unfortunately to my Literary Pursuits, the Rebellion immediately after broke out, which disconcerted all our Measures, and cut off all Hopes of procuring, at that Time, what I so earnestly endeavoured for. Soon after this, the Death of Archbishop *Potter* happening, to my irretrievable Loss, who, with a very engaging Condescension in my Favour, had given me particular Encouragement to prosecute my Work, a great Part of which would soon have appeared under his Patronage, our highly-venerated Metropolitan was taken from us, to succeed to the Supreme Patriarchate of our Church; whilst I had prepared for the Press, upon the same Plan with that of the *Canticles*, another of the *Megilloth*, with a Dedication to his Grace, giving some farther Account of my Design. But *Ethiopic* Types not being yet to be had, and a most unhappy State of Health coming upon me, attended with all the Symptoms and Concomitants of the Stone, which held me for many Years, and confin'd me at home, all farther Applications, in a Literary Regard, were dropped, my Undertakings were all intermitted, without Hopes of a Resumption; and, under the Regret of so mortifying a Disappointment, I have long languished: Which my kind Reader will pardon my mentioning

But to resume the Text. The Word *Mystery*, as you observe, is Masculine in the Eastern Versions, and the Relative, used instead of the Word *God*, is so too, as I apprehend, or at least is as probably Masculine as Neuter, especially in the *Coptic*, *Ethiopic*, and *Armenian*. Tho' you seem to take that of the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* for a Conjunction; but it is certainly a Relative, and indeclinable in the *Syriac*, *Ethiopic*, and *Armenian*; and therefore to be render'd by *qui* or *quod*, according to the different Acceptation. But the *Coptic* Tongue is free from such Ambiguity; (I mean in its Manner of expressing its Relative Pronouns) for it^b varies the Gender, in the Use of this Pronoun Relative, *i. e.* uses a distinct Particle for each Gender, Masculine and Feminine, and one that must here be rendered *qui*; from whence I conclude, that the *Ethiopic* must have taken it in the Masculine Sense; and I presume farther, that all the rest (where *God* is not expressed) did the same, and that they read ⲟⲩ, as referring to ⲉⲩⲟⲩ in the preceding Verse. But whether that be the true Reading, I cannot so easily satisfy myself; but think I have Reason for my Opinion of the Reading they followed.—The *Alexandrine* Copy has OC or ⲉⲩ for ⲉⲩⲟⲩ, as they usually wrote it short in old Manuscripts. I suppose it can't be distinguished in the Manuscript which of the two it is: But it is likely it is, and was always (OC) there, and so the Translator found it, or mistook it; for I question not but that it was

tioning here, as it is in order to acquaint him, that my former Intentions reviving proportionably with my State of Health, (by the Blessing of *God*, in a good Degree renewed) according to the same Measure, I purpose to renew the Pursuits so reluctantly relinquished by me just in the Prime of Life; and intend to print, as soon as I can procure Types, as much as I proposed to the two Venerable Primates above-mentioned.

^b It uses different Particles for Pronouns to express the different Genders of *who* and *which*.

was from this same Copy, or the same Edition, or a similar one, that most of these Versions above were made: And I think I have observed them to agree with this more than the *Roman* Edition; and have found in the Old Testament, that the *Ethiopic* and *Coptic* commonly join in the same, even where they follow a faulty Reading: Whence I have concluded the one to be taken from the other, or else that they were collated, &c. which I have mentioned elsewhere. I take this to be a good Presumption, that (OC) was the Reading these Versions followed: And the two last are a great deal older than the *Syriac* Manuscript you mention. Indeed the *Arabic* in *Walton's Polyglot* has *God*, instead of the Relative; (*quod* is put in by the *Latin* Translator, without any Thing to answer it in the *Arabic*) but I give little Credit to his Authority, not knowing his Antiquity; which I suppose some Centuries behind the others.

But, after all, we can only infer from hence, that (OC) was the Reading, in the Times and Countries wherein these Versions were made. But how came *Θεός* afterwards to be the Reading, or (if you please) explicit Reading, and much more commonly *ὁ*, which I think was universally followed by the *Latin* Church, into which she was led by the *Vulgate*, or old *Latin* Translator, who seems to have the greatest Number of Manuscripts on his Side?—To solve this, may I venture a Conjecture? What if we admit OC to have been the general Reading, or at least *ΘC* or *OC*, being generally writ instead of *Θεός*, at the Time when these Copies were taken? This the Copyists considering no farther than as a Relative, (tho' understanding the same with the present Reading) thought the Sentence would run better, by changing the Gender into that of the immediate Antecedent, to which they referr'd it; And so it seems to me to do;
for

for Θεός does not appear to me to come in there so apposite as a Relative would do; nor to be necessary, though the Sense be all the same.—Upon the whole; tho' this favours Θεός as the original Reading, and upon this Consideration I am most inclined to it, yet I don't know how to ascertain the Claims of the two Competitors, without older Manuscripts, or Versions, than we have yet.—But as for the latter, of the Neuter Gender, which has been so much followed by the *Latins*, I entirely reject it, upon the Consideration aforesaid.—And, in fine, as to the ὅς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί, I apprehend it may stand very well with a Reference to Θεός in the preceding Verse. And again; as ὅς is used by the *Greeks*, sometimes for ἔτος and ἐκείνος, in that Sense it may be still more consistent with the Reference before—or rather comes in better demonstratively—thus—*Great is the Mystery of Godliness! He (God) or This (which) was manifested in the Flesh, &c.* And perhaps ὅς will bid fairer for Admission, if we give a greater Emphasis to the prepositive Article of μυστήριον—*Great is this Mystery—or The Mystery—more emphatically.*—But as that which is offered in the immediately foregoing is quite off Hand, and what I never thought of before, it may need a farther Consideration, and more than I have had Time for.

This is all at present that I can recollect to the Purpose, wherein if I find any Thing has met with your Approbation, or given any Satisfaction to your Inquiry, it will be a Pleasure to,

S I R,

Your, &c.

LET.



L E T T E R . II.

S I R,

Nov. 29, 1738.

I Have the Favour of your Last of the 11th Instant, whereupon, by thinking again of the Text in Question, I became more diffident of it than before. The few Considerations I have to offer, will not tend much to settle it in Possession. I suspect even the *Alexandrine* Manuscript, which, in several Respects, I prefer to all the rest. From the Accounts I have of it, 'tis very dubious whether ΘC as now written, was originally there : And again, were that certain, it is very suspicious, not to say very probable, that the Transcriber wrote it with some Diffidence, as to the true Reading ; or else found it otherwise in the Exemplar he copied ; and that it was not the current Reading at that Time, and in that Part of the World. If it be not found, upon some Perusal of the Manuscript, that it writes $\Theta\sigma\varsigma$ commonly with the Abbreviation as above, or at least in several Places, tho' it might be casually, where there is no Controversy of the Text, I shall think this a just Conclusion, and not to be disproved by mere Conjectures or precarious Inferences. And yet if it appear that it does so, this will not settle the present Reading ; for, as it is evident, that a Relative had Possession in the most public and current Copies of the *Alexandrine*, and probably other neighbouring Churches, before this Manuscript was in Being, according to the earliest Date ascribed to it ; so the Transcriber, if a Person of competent Judgment, and one who took due Care of the

Copy, would certainly have writ Θεός^c here at length, to put the Reading out of Question, if it was intended to have Θεός taken for the true Reading, or the Copyist believed it so, or knew it to be the received one at that Time. But whether this be of Importance or not, there is the Authority of all, or the greatest Part of the Eastern and Western Churches against this Reading, if the general Usage of that Time may be allowed for Authority : And that such was the Usage, we have the Testimony of all public Records now remaining ; unless you except your *Syriac* Manuscript, (and perhaps some other *Syriac* Copies must be excepted) which yet is several Centuries later than the Times I refer to ; and therefore will not be admitted for Evidence in the Case.

The

• If ΘC be writ for Θεός in this Manuscript, in every Passage where that Word occurs, and is seldom or never writ otherwise in all the Manuscripts, in the uncial Character, I can scarce have any farther Doubt about this Place. But was it not easy to alter OC into ΘC in this Manuscript without a Discovery, either by the Ink or otherwise, when that was received as the general Reading among the *Greek* Fathers ? And, perhaps, the Manuscript itself is of no older Date than that Time, and then the Authority of the Reading will rest pretty much upon their Sense or Exposition of the Text. If OC was the usual Way of Writing Θεός in the Times referred to ; and this Way of Writing it, is asserted to have generally prevailed as early as in the second Century, it was then the easier to make the Alteration, without an immediate Discovery, and, perhaps, in a Manuscript, in no public Use. But why might it not be also writ OC, with a Stroke connecting the two Letters ? Whence the *Egyptians* took it into their Language and Version of the Scriptures, writing it ΠOC, the *Coptic* Article *pi* being prefixed, and sometimes another Masculine Article OT, as OYOT. From some such Manner of Writing, and particularly of this Text, all the most antient and valuable Oriental Versions may have taken the Reading for OC, as their Authors certainly read it in the Copies they translated from : The transverse Stroke in Θ might easily migrate into the connecting Line, as in the Example, and the superinduced Stroke might not be always observed.

The most public and approved Copies, one may reasonably conclude, had not *Θεος*, when the *Coptic* and *Ethiopic* Versions were taken; for would so considerable and eminent a Part of the Catholic Church at that Time have authoris'd a corrupt Reading, if there was any other known, or supposed to be more authentic? And as these Versions must have been derived from the most public Copies then extant in the *Alexandrine* Church, or in that Part of the World, so the present *Alexandrine* Manuscript must have been likewise from the same; for it was certainly from the current Copy in the *African* Church: And therefore I think it most probable, that the Relative (OC) was the current Reading: Or it might be taken, in the Abbreviation, for *Θεος*, by the Transcriber, or Reader, at Pleasure, if there was no other explicit Reading then received.

And here, by the Way, I must remember the Difficulty you mention, my former Letter left with you, in not expressing clearly what I said of the Variation of Gender, in the *Coptic* Relative in this Point. I observed that the Relative here is an Indclinable in all the other *Oriental* Versions, and stands for any Gender, according to that of the Matter, or Part of Speech, with which it is join'd. And indeed, the *Oriental*s are not exact in their Syntax, but often join together different Genders in their Regimen. This is not uncommon in the *Hebrew*, notwithstanding what some have laboured to shew the contrary; but more especially the *Ethiopic*.

The *Coptic* uses here a Relative, which may be render'd either by *qui* or *quod*: Rather, as it is an *Epicene*, it cannot, but by Accommodation to the Genius of the Language into which it is rendered, be

put in the Neuter, which is a Gender it will not properly bear in the Original; the Neuter being unknown to most of the *Oriental*s. But this being, strictly speaking, a Pronoun Masculine, it never stands directly for the Feminine, for that is expressed by another distinct Particle. This is what I meant, by speaking of the *Coptic*'s varying the Gender, (not the Gender of the Relative Particle) *viz.* that the *Coptic* expresses each Gender by a distinct or peculiar Pronoun, which the other Languages usually comprehend all under one: Though the *Arabic* and *Ethiopic* have both the Feminine and Masculine distinct, yet the latter, (no more than the *Syriac*) does not always apply the distinctive Feminine, but uses the Indeclinable *za*, as the *Syriac*, *Chaldee*, and *Samaritan* their *di*, promiscuously. And in the same Manner the *Hebrew* uses *Asher*: The *Armenian* uses *uer* or *wer*: The *Persians* have no Genders, no more than the *English*: The *Turks* have peculiar Pronouns, &c. for all three; and the *Cophiti* express the Masculine and Epicene Singular, by *phi*, and the Feminine by *thi*.

As these Tongues, in Strictness, reduce all Things to these two Genders; so in this Case, as well as all others, the more worthy ought to take Place, and *qui* will be preferred to *quod*, which is inconsistent with the Form of Speech in this Language. But still here is no Evidence, from the Versions themselves, whether the Orientals read the *Greek* Pronoun in the Masculine or Neuter: This one may safely pronounce. And it is not very certain, whether they referr'd to the preceding Θεός or μυστήριον; but I think most probably to the latter, as the immediate Antecedent; or to both collectively, as implying

ing the same Thing. Thus δ may stand very well, as it relates to the Person spoken of.

But how shall we thus collect, that the Translator read OC in his *Prototype*? Not by the Relative he uses, which might refer to $\muυσήριον$, were it Masculine or Neuter in his own Language; but in the same View that σ relates to the Person spoken of, as the subject Matter, and not the Form of Speech: For are not such Enallages common in most Languages? And why the *Greek* may not be allowed to use the same Figure here, I see not.—I do not know whether there are any such Instances in the New Testament; but I conceive it very elegant in common Language; and methinks it agrees better with what immediately follows in the Context, to represent *the Mystery* (by way of Eminence) *Personally*, as being but a Periphrasis of the Θεάνδρωπος.^d

In our Language, as well as in others, the Office, or most distinguishing Property or Adjunct, is ordinarily made use of instead of the Person's self, who is thereby intended.—As the Crown, the Government, the Regency, the Privy-Seal, and innumerable other Expressions of that Sort, both of collective and simple Intendment, implying the Functions, Properties,

^d After the Writing of this, I recollected an adequate Instance of this Manner of Expression in the *Septuagint*, (whose Language is commonly followed in the Books of the New Testament) where a Relative Masculine comes immediately after a Neuter Antecedent, as is evident in $\omega\tau\epsilon\rho\mu\alpha$ and $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$, *Gen.* iii. 15.

I think this fully answers my Sense, in referring the Article or Relative to the Person understood, and not coupling it with the Noun itself of a different Gender; in which Circumstance, I must own, the two Passages do not seem to answer up to each other in the Expression.

But *Ephes.* i. 13, 14. $\tau\tilde{\omega}$ Πνεύματι—ὃς ἐστὶν ἀρραβὼν, is, I apprehend, full in Point.

erties, or principal Capacities, either of a Multitude of the same Denomination, or of a single Person. Now if our Language expressed the Genders, and were any of these Words of the Neuter, or other Genders, would it not be more elegant, as well as more correspondent to the Rationale of Language, and to good Sense, to put the Relative in the Masculine, when these Offices were supplied by Males? I am humbly of Opinion, it would be so; and that this is, in a great Measure, the Rationale of Language with the *Oriental*s; in which Regard, they have properly but two Genders, to which every Thing may be properly and comprehensively reduced.

Thus I suppose $\Theta\varsigma$ may be admitted to be proper Language in this Place, even referring to $\mu\upsilon\tau\eta\pi\iota\omicron\nu$, or with that to $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ collectively; especially in an *Hellenistical* Writer, and much more emphatical than the Neuter $\Theta\epsilon$. And thus I am inclined at present to think it was originally written. For if $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ was genuine, and duly placed, how came it to be dropt or exploded, and so early, by the greatest and most excellent Part, if not by the whole Catholic Church?--That OC might be changed into $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ is easy to conceive, because that was the Catholic Sense, whilst OC was retain'd; and therefore $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ might easily slip in to the Text, by way of *Scholion* or otherwise. But how the whole Western Church, and so early as the making the *Italic* or first *Latin* Translation, should have known nothing of $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$, or followed the other Reading, if $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ was authentic, or so reputed, and never afterwards altered it in the Translation, is to me not very easy to account for. In short, as this is the most ancient Testimony for the Relative, so it weighs with me

me above all the rest, and makes me conclude for the Relative, which by Accommodation might have been early changed into the Neuter.

You object to what I alledged of the Number of Manuscripts on the Side of the Relative, and say you do not know one Manuscript now in the World, that reads γ .—*Velesius's* sixteen Manuscripts, so often referred to, in this Regard, must here be set aside, as they are now found to be of no Credit; and 'tis doubtful whether these pretended Manuscripts ever existed. But there is the *Clermont* Manuscript, that reads δ , as it is represented in the Collection of Readings in Bishop *Walton's* Polyglot; and so it is by Mr. *Wetstein*, in the Prolegomena to his *Greek Testament*, a (⊖) being plainly added (according to those that cite it) by another Hand, in other Ink, and out of the Line. What Number of Manuscripts may be found to read γ , I know not: But I wou'd be glad to know, if any, that plainly read $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$, be older than these, or so old as the Times of the afore-said *Oriental Versions*.

It will be also worth examining whether any, and which, of the antient Manuscripts which have $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ in this Place, write it as it is abbreviated in the *Alexandrine*, ° and if in the Place before us, whether any where else.

• After all, it is an untoward Circumstance for this Text, that all the oldest Manuscripts read it in so suspicious a Manner. As for the junior Manuscripts, they are all so many Centuries later than the *Oriental Versions* and the *Greek Fathers*, into whose Expositions and Comments of the Text their whole Authority may be fairly resolved, that a Waggon-Load of them consentient in this Reading, will add nothing towards establishing the authentic Reading. I do not know whether any of them have been compared, in general, with the *Alexandrine*

I have yet a Suspicion of $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$, as it occurs here. I think it is never found in the New Testament in the Nominative Case, without the Prepositive Article, unless another Noun precedes in the same Predicament, which takes the Article first, as, $\delta\ \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, &c. But this I have not duly examined. If the Observation be just, methinks $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ will want its necessary Prefix or Supporter, and will seem to have taken Place of it, viz. the Article. And then may not another Suspicion arise, that θ is older than ϵ ; in the Manuscripts. Whence one may make this double Inference: 1. That θ the Relative was the original Read-

andrine or *Vatican*, to prove a continued Succession of correspondent Copies; for as there are no intermediate Manuscripts, for several Centuries, how shall these latter prove against the antient Versions, and the whole *Western* Church, that they have delivered to us the original Reading, which all the others had so egregiously missed of; and the oldest have handed down, in such a Manner, as to give Suspicion, if not manifest Tokens, in some, of later Falsification?—All the oldest *Oriental* Versions, as well as the *Latin Vulgate*, hold with the *Alexandrine* more than with the *Vatican* Manuscript; and I believe all these are older than it, and it is likely were taken from the same or a similar Copy, which it has followed; for which Reason, there is the more Room to suspect this Text has been altered since.

But it is far from my Intention to seek to prepossess the Reader against the Manuscripts, which such a Parade has been made of: Let him judge for himself.

But it is proper to add here, That *Wotton*, in his Edition of *Cleri. Roman.* assures us, that Θ is frequently writ in this Manuscript, instead of Θ , by Mistake or Inadvertency of the Transcriber; and supposes that $\Theta\mathcal{C}$ had been writ instead of $\Theta\mathcal{C}$ (the common Way of Writing $\Theta\epsilon\delta\varsigma$) in some old Manuscripts, in the Passage in Dispute; and this Slip or Mistake might have been the Cause of diffusing $\theta\varsigma$ thro' so many Copies.—Nevertheless he judges it to have been always

$\Theta\mathcal{C}$ in this Manuscript. But could the several Authors of the most antient Versions, (established in the public Service of so many Apostolical Churches, and for Ages together) with all the succeeding Leaders and Members of the said Churches, who continued in the Use of them for so long a Time, be guilty of such an Oversight, as not to be aware of, and never to discover the Error?

Reading; and, again, 2. That it might be originally θ Θεός, and that Θεός had somehow been very early dropt in a Manuscript that had misl'd all the rest. But hereupon I wish to be informed, whether any antient Manuscript reads plainly θ , besides the *Alexandrine*, as that is supposed to do: If not, I shall, for my Part, leave it in the *Middle*, between θ , θ Θεός, and θ s.

I am sometimes also inclined to think, that Θεός does not come properly in there for the Context. *Grotius* quotes *Hincmar*, who suspects it to have been put in by the *Nestorians*. This is a Circumstance worth inquiring into very accurately, which may give some Light about the Manuscripts and Versions which read it so, both as to their Antiquity and Authority.

I have thus given you my Suspicions about the Genuineness of this Text, which I hope may be of Use to you in your Undertaking to establish it; because they may furnish Matter of such Inquiry as may be a Means of clearing them off, and settling the Point in Question: For one solid Proof will obviate all that has been objected. But I confess I know of none such at present; yet, possibly, so much may be traced out, pursuant to these Inquiries, as may very much corroborate the present Text, so far at least as to add to it a greater Degree of Probability; for more I do not expect.

I heartily wish you Success in so laudable a Pursuit, as an ingenuous Inquiry after Truth, which always deserves our Praise, and the best Assistance of every Well wisher to it; and shall be much pleased to find this Text established on sure Grounds. But as I think the Doctrine intended to be served by it,

already sufficiently evinc'd^e, I am in no Pain for the Reading here, which, either Way, will answer the same Purposes.

I shall hope to hear further from you on this Occasion; being,

S I R,

Your, &c.

^e The Author professed himself throughout these Discussions to be quite free from any Attachment to either Side of the Question; and therefore examined whatever was proposed to him with all Freedom, and a resolved Indifference to any Thing but the Truth sought for; which necessarily engaged him to make many Objections, and not readily to admit of what was offered in Reply. This did not seem to be relished by the zealous Advocate for the Text in Controversy, who soon appeared to be too much interested in the Subject, to be free from Prejudice; the Occasion of which was not then known to the Author, nor for a long Time after.



LET



L E T T E R III.

S I R,

Feb. 13, 1738-9.

S OON after I had sent you my Last, I recollected what had been writ of the *Velefian* Manuscripts. — I am now also certified of $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}s$ being used without the Article; but it is so seldom that it comes without it in *these Books*, that there was Room for the Query: For the Passages in the Gospels do not satisfy me of it, the Antecedent $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}s$ having it; so as to make it less to be expected, according to the Rules of Language, to be prefixt to the subsequent $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}s$, as it were in the same Sentence, and where it begins no new Matter of Discourse. I speak this in respect to the Writers of the New Testament only, it being indifferent with the *Greeks* to use the prepositive Article or not.

That all the Eastern Versions are consentient in reading with the Relative, in the Passage in Dispute, is a sufficient Proof that they read so in the Original from whence they were made, there being no Colour for Suspicion of the contrary. But whether the current Reading in all Places was then plainly OC or ΘC , will not be easily determined hence: But so far I think appears, that the Translators certainly took it to be OC. And it is a strong Presumption, that That, or the Relative in one of the Genders, was commonly thought the true Reading at that Time, or it is strange that all these Versions should pass uncorrected all the Time they were in Use, or from that Time till now, without any Animadversion of

the Error, as far as appears. And it seems further probable, that OC was generally accepted, because St. *Jerome* did not correct the old *Italick*, which had the Relative in the Neuter, thinking it not material in which Gender it was taken, or to which Antecedent it referred : Whereas, if he had known *Θεός* to be the original Text, to be sure, he would not have passed it as a Trifle which of the two Readings was followed in the *Latin* Version, and consequently by the whole *Latin* Church.—But tho' it be granted, that the Western Church, in her Translation, has all along followed the Reading with the Relative, yet it is not certain whether from a Neuter or Masculine Original ; for probably the Translator accommodated it in his Version to the immediate Antecedent, (the *Mystery* and not the *Person* of Christ) thinking the Construction would thus run easier. And there is the greater Appearance of this, as perhaps no antient Manuscript is found that reads *ὁ*, since the *Clermont* does not clearly so. And, by the Way, that Manuscript and some other of its Relatives, as is supposed, taken by a Western Hand, have been so rudely copied by an ignorant Scribe, ^f who understood not *Greek*

^f To give a familiar Idea of the Futility of reckoning so much on Transcripts from Transcripts, and all, perhaps, one after another, from the inaccurate Copy of an ignorant or blundering Scribe, may I have Leave here to introduce the Result of a late ludicrous Sort of Inquiry, *pour passer le tems*, occasioned by some Reflections on the *Antiques*, and that *Farras* of Novelties one meets with in many modern Descriptions of the Countries of the *Levant*, wherein the *Arabic* Names and common Phrases of the Country are so disguised and impertinently rendered. (The ingenious Reviewers of the Ruins of *Palmyra* and *Balbec* are not of this Class.) The Subject of this little Investigation was the *Pater Noster* in several Languages, as it is represented in a short Geographical Account of the present State of the several Nations of the World. Here is a convincing Instance to our Purpose of the Insecurity of relying on Transcripts, and how much the Ignorance of several of the Languages, here presented, must occasion an almost unavoidable

Greek, which is the Cause of their being so miswritten, that their intrinsic Value I fear is very small; and their Authority, in a true Estimate, will go but a little Way in establishing the Original Text.

Upon the foregoing Consideration of the Concurrence of all the Eastern Versions, I think it at least as probable as the contrary, that your *Syriac* Version or Manuscript which reads Θεος, must be of a later Date,

avoidable Failure in Copies of this Sort, arising from the Incompetency of the Transcriber.

And, first, to regard the *Arabic* and *Persian*; I suppose the Original he copied must answer for his Manner of Reading, as well as for their differing from any printed Versions which I have seen, especially the *Persic*, two Thirds of which is intirely discrepant from the several Prints of the Gospel Versions, and from that of *Angelus à S. Joseph* (in his *Persian Dictionary*) who likewise differs, in two or three Sentences intirely, from the foregoing.

After this, it was an agreeable Surprise to find he had acquitted himself of the *Syriac*, as well as if he had understood it. But why the Editor did not chuse to exhibit the *Ethiopic* or *Abyssinian Pater* in their proper Language, which they call their *Book Language*, and use it alone in *Sacris*, in the *Royal Mandates*, and whatever is put in Writing, relating to the Court or Camp, and wherein all their Literature is contained; being as much a living Language with them, as the *Syriac* is with the *Maronites*, and more so; why he did not present his Reader with this, there seems no other Reason, but that the one was ready to his Hand, from other Collections, and the other was unknown to him, or he could not meet with it turn'd out of the original Character into a *Latin* one. For the Reason for giving it a Place as well as the *Syriac* is equal, both being the Ecclesiastical Languages of their respective Countries.—Next for his *Egyptian* or *Coptic Specimen*. *—Here his Original was probably copied from *Kircher*, (an insufficient and fallacious Guide.) The Errors in the Structure or Connection of Words, and the Disjunction of inseperable Letters, make meer Jargon of some of the Expressions: A Default, which will be best seen or rectified by comparing the *Coptic* Version of the New Testament, published by *Dr. Wilkins*.

* I have not *Chamberlain's Lord's Prayer* at Hand, so cannot tell whether this small Geographer, or his Predecessor in the same Way, has not copied from that Collection; which is but the Successor of a foreign one.

Date, than that we have in all the printed Books, agreeable to all the Copies hitherto known in *Europe*, and approved and used by the *Syrian Church*, and at first printed by its Authority, as it may be said; which, no Doubt, chose what was then esteem'd the best Copy or Version, and of uninterrupted Use among them. And hence I apprehend that this Copy, or different Version, (if it be one) might be modell'd, in this Passage, according to the explicit Reading of the *Greek Fathers*, who, as I before observed, understood the Text as it is now written; and from their reciting the Word at large (supposing $\overline{\text{OC}}$, or however it might be writ in short, to be understood as the Abbreviature of $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$) or explaining it in the Sense of the present Reading; thence $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$, at full Length, got into the *Greek Copies* of that Age, and then was transmitted down to us, in the Generality of Manuscripts now extant.

Now there are none of these *Greek Manuscripts* older than the Age I speak of, at the utmost; perhaps none will be found so old, which read $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ at Length. Whether the *Vatican* be so old, I think uncertain. But the Versions aforesaid are all I believe as old, at least some of them far older; as the old *Italic*, *Syriac*, perhaps the *Coptic*: The *Ethiopic* and *Armenian* are as old.—And now I refer it to others, whether these won't gain a Verdict, upon a fair and unprejudiced Discussion. I cannot but look upon such a Concurrence of Evidence to be of great Weight, and to evince as clearly as may be, without a direct and express Proof, that $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ was not the explicit or general Reading at that Time; and that most probably *os* was commonly written for it, however it might be marked or diversly taken by different Readers.

That

That your Manuscript reads *Ptolemais* according to the *Greek* and not *Acco*, *Acts* 21. 7.—is not, I conceive, a Proof of its being an older Copy or Version than the other ; for the *Greek* and *Latin* Names, obtruded on conquer'd Cities and Places, &c. 'tis observed, never took among the People of this Country ; and when and however imposed, and perhaps retained whilst the Language was spoke, and the Conqueror's Yoke submitted to ; yet the former were resumed, when these were thrown off, and they changed Masters more agreeably to their own Customs and Manners : Instances hereof are obvious, which remain a lasting Evidence of it in the same Country to this Day. Hence *Acco*, the antient Name, and agreeable to that used in the *Septuagint*, was thought fit to be retained by the *Syriac* Translator, perhaps when the Version was first made ; and the City might continue to be known and go by its antient Name, among those that spoke the *Syriac* Language : Which Name it has recovered, and now retains with small Variation : So that the later Name might be inserted by some later Scribe or Transcriber of this Copy, or used by this different Translator, if he be such, to express the *Greek* Name, which might be better known to the *Westerns* and Descendents of the *Greeks*, who were mingled with them.

It would be some Satisfaction to me to know, whether your *Syriac* Manuscript agrees with the *Alexandrine* or *Vatican* Copy : Which may be soon observed, in some of the material Differences, among the Collations at the End of *Wetstein's* New Testament. Likewise, whether it translates the *Greek* prepositive Article, by a Pronoun of the Third Person equivalent to *ἐκεῖνος* or *αὐτός*, as we find in the suppletive *Apocalyp's*, in the printed Books ; and what Affixes it uses with its Nouns ; whether *dilo*, or not, in Sign of the Genitive.

Genitive Case: And lastly, whether it has that remarkable Verse, 1 *John* v. 7.

As to *Hincmar's* Narrative it must be charged both on him and his Author *Liberatus*, as pure Stupidity, in transmitting to us the most senseless Story imaginable; if it was not plain from it, that OC was the Reading, the first Letter of which was either changed into Θ or Ω; they are not clear which of them. * Their Inconsistency or Confusion seems to lie in the Account of *Macedonius* his making this Falsification, and of the Causes of his Ejection out of his Bishoprick.

But

* If the learned Author of these Queries, who has written a Critical Dissertation on the Text, and has been pretty diffuse on the Article here in Question, has cleared this Account of Confusion and Inconsistency, and proved (as he assumes for granted) that Θςδς was the established and common Reading of the *Greek* at the Time spoken of, and that it was not ςς that *Macedonius* was accused of making too free with; or for making it ΘC or ΩC, or that he had restored Θςδς in some Copies he had met with, which by Mistake had ςς, as he thinks (or as some think the Text was then read, ςς Θςδς, which he might correct for Θςδς only) and if it does not appear to him upon the Face of the Narrative, that OC was read in the Text, and some how altered by *Macedonius*, according to the Accusation, true or false; I am content he should think his own Way, and others with him.

However, I congratulate him upon his honest Zeal, with which he has laboured his Point, and for the Eclaircissement he has given to the Subject: His Pains have been very laudably, and not unsuccessfully, employed; and I hope Θςδς will not henceforth be attempted to be expunged out of the Text, for no other Reading has now an equal Right to its Place.

In fine, I apprehend that all the *Greek* Fathers, about the Time mention'd, and quoted by the Author, understood the Text of God the Son there spoken of; but that Θςδς was at that Time the explicit and generally received Reading, notwithstanding their Comments, or Interpretation, or Quotations, if you please, I must beg Leave to doubt, not to say dispute; for it must be allowed that St. *Jerome* knew what was the current, if not the best, Reading in his Time; with respect to which I have said enough before.

But it appears from it, that OC was the Reading he had tampered with ; and it is natural to infer from it, that the same Reading was received in the Time of our Authors of this Narrative, or was in such Copies as the *Latins* were acquainted with.—And hereupon it is very observable, that the *Latin Vulgate* generally agrees with the *Alexandrine* Manuscript, where that differs from the *Roman* Copies ; whence I conclude, that the Authors of the old *Italick* and St. *Jerome* read the Text with a Relative instead of Θεός ; which will go a great Way towards ascertaining this to have been the received Reading, or at least the most general, in *Asia* and *Africa*, and all the *West* ; and I doubt will furnish an untractable Argument, that Θεός was unknown in this Place, before the *Greek* Fathers of the Beginning of the fifth Century thus explained the Passage, and wrote Θεός in their Quotations ; whence it might pass into the Copies from that Time downwards.

As for the several Originals of the antient Versions, which you desire my Opinion of : My Answer is short. For the New Testament ; most of them had but one and the same Original, which is the *Greek* ; as is easy to prove, and will be manifest upon a very slight Collation.

And, first, for the *Syriac* of Bishop *Walton's* Edition ; that it is the *Versio simplex et antiqua*, I think we may be sufficiently assured, till any Thing appears to the contrary, more than what has been hitherto alledged against it. Its wanting four of the seven *Catholic Epistles*, &c. I think one very good Proof of it, for Reasons well known. Its being in general Use in the *Syrian* Church, and having been so from the first Ages without Interruption, accord-

ing to their Tradition, which is sufficiently founded, is a convincing Testimony of its Primitiveness ; and the more, as they have another, (if not more beside) which is universally acknowledged by them for a later Version, and therefore not used in their *Public Offices*.—The Antiquity of this Version is evident, from its being mentioned by the antient *Greek* Fathers, and several more antient of its own Church, one of which was present in the Council of *Nice*, and wrote Commentaries upon it ; and even so early, it was the constant Tradition, that it had come down from the Times of the Apostles. However, for its Antiquity, it is enough in this Point, that it was extant in these Times we speak of, and, with great Probability, long before.—It was in such great Repute about the Time of *St. Chrysostom*, that the *Armenian* Version, then made from the *Greek*, was compared and conformed with it, as the best Rule and Guide, then known, for translating the Original. It in general agrees with the *Alexandrine*, contrary to the *Vatican* ; and so doth the *Vulgate*, *Ethiopic*, *Coptic*, *Armenian* : Which, by the Way, drops in another Argument, that the *Alexandrine* was of the Copy, Transcript, or of the same Edition that *St. Jerome* chiefly followed, as well as the Translation aforesaid ; and consequently we may infer, that they all read OC, and knew not the other Reading of ŌC, or ΘC, or did not think it authentic, or generally approved ; and so originally did the *Alexandrine*.

Upon the whole ; the present Reading being in Possession, has a better Title than any that can be set up against it ; and it would be great Presumption to eject it, upon no better Evidence or Claim than can be made in Opposition : And as it has the Authority of the *Greek* Church, in its better Ages, to which I pay the greatest Deference, and which might

might seem to outweigh the whole Christian World besides, I am willing to prefer it to both *East* and *West*.

As I do not perceive myself acted by any Prevention or Bias in this Inquiry or Determination, I think I have considered it with as great an Indifference and Detachment, as one can use, to prove the Force of what can be offered on either Side. And, after all, it is my Opinion, one cannot pronounce any definitive Sentence upon it. This is my final Determination, and so I leave it. But,

Secondly, I am to answer to your next Inquiry about the *Arabic* Version of the New Testament in the *London Polyglot*.—And this appears most evidently translated from the *Greek*; as it will be found by the most cursory Collation, and confirmed by the strictest Examination.—It differs from all the Versions aforesaid, and almost universally follows the *Vatican* in its Differences with the rest; so that I wonder what Version can be supposed for its Original; and should have been more surprized at such an Assertion as that of *F. Simon*, had it come from any other Person, whose Judgment and Sincerity I could have more depended on, or thought better of.—He had particular Views, and not of the best or fairest, towards our *Polyglot*, which he proposed to rival; but failed in his Project.

Thirdly, The *Coptic* holds with the *Greek* so literally and exactly, in general, that I think it carries abundant Evidence of its Original; for to have been taken from any of the Translations we have, would have sufficiently discovered a Medium, tho' it were ever so exact.—I cannot undertake to fix with Certainty the Date of this Translation, but think it most probably to have been made in, or about, the fourth

Century, when the Study of the Holy Scriptures flourished so much in *Egypt*, which then abounded with Monasteries full of learned Monks, when the *Greek* Tongue was so well understood by the Religious and Clergy. I think it highly improbable that it should be made much later. ^h

Fourthly,

^h Is it not more reasonable to believe a Translation to have been made into the *Vulgar* Tongue nearer the Beginnings of the *Egyptian* Church, than to suppose the People left destitute of the Benefit of reading the Scriptures, or hearing them read, in a Tongue they understood, for 3, 4, 5, or 6 hundred Years; as some carry this Version no higher up than the 5th or 6th Century? But how does it appear, that the present *Coptic* was the *Vulgar* Language of *Egypt* at that Time? *Greek* was then become the common Language of the Country, (being there propagated from the Time of *Alexander*, and even long before, by *Psammetichus*) and continued to be so, till its Conquest by the *Arabs*; so that the old *Egyptian* Tongue must have remained in Use only among the Rustics, and in the Villages, in the Times we are speaking of. An Objection lies against this, which seems to refute the Notion of the *Greek's* being so generally the Language of *Egypt*, in or about the fourth Century, as we suppose: The *Coptic* Church has all its Liturgies and Rituals in its own Language, and likewise the History of the first four General Councils; to which no later Date can be well assign'd than the fifth Century, nor to that of their Liturgies than near the Council of *Chalcedon*; when, out of Hatred to its Decrees, they separated from the *Greek* Catholic Church; and then, in Aversion and Opposition to their *Greek* Oppressors, must have put all their Church Offices into the *Coptic*, which must have been a Language then commonly understood; tho' perhaps not the usual Language of the better Sort in Cities and Towns: And thus the Clergy would propagate and keep up the Use of that Language, amongst all the Members of their Church, which probably continued till the *Arabic* assumed its Place. Upon this Consideration it may be well conjectured, that the Scriptures were then translated into *Coptic*, if not before. And yet I think it appears from *Asbanasius*, *Palladius*, and others, that the Scriptures, or Part of them, were in the *Egyptian* Tongue about the Middle of the third Century.

Of the printed Version I cannot forbear to observe in this Place, that the learned Prelate, to whom the Editor dedicated his *Coptic Pentateuch*, told me, he wondered there were no various Readings found in collating the several Manuscripts of that Version; which he seemed to think might deserve a Revision for further Satisfaction. This Hint I beg to leave with such learned Gentlemen as have Opportunity of examining

Fourthly, I have heard of no *Persic* Version of *St. Paul's* Epistles, the antient *Persic* Version of Scripture being supposed to be lost.

Fifthly, There is as much Evidence as need be desired, that none of these Versions were made from the *Latin*, which will be clearly perceived by those that peruse them with any Diligence. Nor do I think that any of them has received any considerable Corrections from it. I must only except the *Ethiopic*, because the Editors having only an imperfect Copy, were obliged, as they acquaint us, to supply the whole Book (as I remember) of the *Acts*, by translating from the *Greek* and *Latin*. And it is not unlikely that they might have supplied other Chasms in the same Manner; which makes it the more to be wished that we had a perfect Copy out of *Abyssinia*, where we are assured there is one, and of a later Version. However, it appears, that in the Main, this was made from the *Greek* according to the *Alexandrine*, by its peculiar rendering and applying, and sometimes misrendering or mistaking, some
Greek

mining the Manuscripts. And I hope there will not be wanting those, who will herein satisfy the Curious, on a proper Occasion.

The *Coptic* and *Ethiopic* Versions agreeing, in following the same *Greek* Original; both erring alike, when they mistranslate and when they are misled by a faulty Copy; neither of them holding altogether with the *Alexandrine* or *Vatican*, but chiefly with the latter; and one or both, in some Places, reading differently from any *Greek* Copies now extant, is a farther Consideration to induce one to be more inquisitive after the several Copies of these Versions.

The late Dr. *Wilkins* proposed to publish the *Coptic Psalms*, *Daniel*, the twelve Minor Prophets, with a *Coptic* Grammar and Lexicon, which he intimated he had ready for the Press, if he could find a *Mecenas* or a Bookseller. I would be glad to be informed how and where the Doctor left them: And whether *Crozius* published the *Coptic* Lexicon he promised An. 1732. 'Tis Pity these Books should sleep in the Dust, for Want of an Undertaker, or a Subscription; if that would fetch them out,

Greek Words ; which could not have been, but by immediately taking it from the *Greek*, as it is manifest from the Original in these Passages.

If I can be of farther Service, you may freely command,

S I R,

Your obedient humble Servant,



LET-



L E T T E R IV.

S I R,

August 1, 1739.

— **B**Y what I can collect from your Account of Mr. R——'s Manuscript, in some of the Instances I desired of you, I am inclined to think it the same Version from whence the four *Catholic Epistles* and the *Apocalyps*, wanting in the old *Syriac* Version, were published by *Pocock* and *De Dieu*. But, without farther Examination, I can make no proper Judgment of it.

It is plain to me that *Aloho*, in the Place in Question, is put in Construction with the preceding Words, to express the *Greek* with more *Emphasis*. And, indeed, without it, the Translator, by his Manner of Expression, had not rendered the Sense at all.—And as he translates the same Word differently in other Places, it is farther evident, that this was his Intention here; which will be very manifest by giving two different literal Translations of his Words: *Arcanum S. Mysterium pulchritudinis timoris: Deus, qui revelatus erat in Carne*. Thus *ἐν ὁρίβειν* is here rendered according to the simple Composition of the Word, but not in its religious Use and Acceptation; and the Translator could not be so injudicious as to think he had fully rendered it by these two Words, without the Addition of *Aloho*, without which there is no Sense: For it appears by his Manner, that he intended to give it its full Force, in rendering the *ἐν* by *Shaphiroth*. Neither does the Relative *di* come well in after *Aloho* in the Nominative, which I think not agreeable to the Genius of these Tongues, nor to the common Syntax. Therefore

fore I take this first Translation and the Sense of it to be absurd, and contrary to the *Syrian's* Meaning. But take the natural Translation of the *Syriac* Words, and all appears easy in the Construction, and consequently that is most likely to be the Author's Sense. *Arcanum pulchritudinis timoris Dei, qui revelatus erat—vel quod*, i. e. *quæ Res*; the Relative in the Neuter. The *Latin* Translator in the *Polyglot* renders it by *quod*¹ the Conjunctive, which makes the Sense still more averse from our present Reading.

The *Hu* you mention, in the Margin of Mr. R——'s Manuscript, with a Reference to some one or more Manuscripts, which have that Reading, seems to me to infer, that they have *Aloho* too; and then I should suspect that *Hu* was a Translation of the Relative *OC*, or intended to express it. I wish I had more Grounds for suspecting likewise, that *Θεος* was in the Original, either with the prepositive Article, or followed with the Relative, which being somehow slipped out of the Text very early in some Manuscript that was much propagated in its Transcripts, might have occasioned all this Discrepancy in the Versions and Copies. Indeed *Hu* might stand there without *Aloho*, and then it would certainly point out the Relative in its Original.

If

¹ So does *Trostius* in his Edition of the *Syriac* Testament. But tho' the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic* may both of them bear such a Translation, yet I believe any indifferent Reader that understands them, or considers the Passage fairly, by being only instructed in their common Signification, will naturally take the Particle in both Tongues, which stands occasionally for both a Relative and a Conjunction, in the Sense of the former, and that too in what Gender he likes best for the Syntax, as they invariably (as to the Spelling or Letters) stand for any Gender.

I don't apprehend the *Latin* Translator of the *Polyglot Ethiopic* Version intended a Conjunction by his *quod*; tho' he uses a Masculine Participle in the following Expression, and so on. For I think he has taken the Sense of the Place as I have done, and have explained myself above, notwithstanding a little forbidding Grammatical Nicety.

If this Passage was farther inquired into among all the *Syriac* Manuscripts, which an Opportunity might be had of consulting in the *Levant*, and other Parts of the *East*, by a proper Application, thro' some Gentleman concerned in the *Turky* Trade, to some *Maronite* Priest, or others of the *Syrian* Church, acquainted with their antient Language, we might probably come to greater Certainty in settling this Text. Such an Inquiry may be easily made by several Means, too obvious to mention.

I come now to your Questions proposed: And for the *First*, I answer, That I mention'd the *Eastern* Versions in general, making little Account of the *Arabic* here; for which I gave a Reason in some of my former Letters, without any Regard to that of *Erpenius*, as giving it the Preference, which is what it cannot claim.

Secondly, I do not conceive that there are sufficient Grounds for overthrowing the Authority of the Versions in this Case, by the Authority of the *Greek* Manuscripts and *Fathers*, because the one appears to have been publicly recognized by the general and continued Use of their several Churches, which cannot be said for the other; and therefore, from the Nature of Legal Evidence, and the Rules of Judicial Procedures, the latter cannot stand in Competition, or be brought in Eviction of the former: But I think I alledged more, in regard to their several Authorities, in my former Letters; which, in my Apprehension, was a farther Abatement of the Authority of the *Greeks* in this Question.

Thirdly, That *St. Jerome* published the New Testament in general, the Epistles as well as the Gospels, appears from his own Words, in his Pro-

logue to the seven Canonical Epistles.—*In cæteris vero Epistolis, quantum a nostra aliorum distet Editio, Lectoris Prudentia derelinquo.*—From whence both his Revival^k and Alteration^k is evident. St. *Austin* calls his Edition a new Version, and himself seems to intimate as much; tho' it seems more so, from his rectifying and improving the former, than giving an entirely new Translation. Both of which appears from his Account of his Edition prefixed to it.—*Ita Calamum temperavimus, ut his tantum, quæ Sensum mutare videbantur, correctis, reliqua manere pateremur, ut fuerant.*—Whence we may surely conclude, that St. *Jerome* would not have passed this Text uncorrected, or have left it at this Variance with the Original, if he had known of any such Variance at that Time, with such a Change in the Sense.

As for the *Vulgar Latin's* reading differently from what St. *Jerome* took to be the true Reading, it concludes nothing against this, nor can amount to any Manner of Proof. Such Differences do not affect the Point, in my Opinion; nor do I think it to the Purpose to consider them in this Case.

Fourthly, That the Deficiencies in the *Ethiopic* Version were supplied from the *Greek* and *Latin*, is what I observed to you from the Confession of the Editors themselves; but that the Version itself was corrected by it, does not appear, neither do I suspect it: For as it was published at *Rome*, and there completed, I am apt to think the Editors would at least have hinted as much, that their Work might there be more favourably received. Neither is there any Appearance or Room for Suspicion, that the other Versions you mention were corrected by the *Latin*,
no

^k This has been a little doubted of by some learned Critics.

no more than the *Alexandrine* Manuscript itself: To which as they all conform, and the *Vulgate* likewise, particularly where it differs from the *Vatican*, they seem to evince that the *Alexandrine* is (at least) a Copy taken from their common Original, if it be not prior to them: And this, in Anticipation of your seventh Question, is a strong Presumption that the *Alexandrine* read originally OC. Direct Proofs I know none; but this, with what I formerly alledged hereupon, seems to me to outweigh whatever may be urged to the contrary.

Fifthly, I think it a sufficient Proof that the Original of these Versions read OC, and that it was then a general, or the most commonly received Reading; but it does not seem to be a Proof, that OC was the original Reading. Nevertheless, when we consider the Antiquity of the *Latin Vulgate*, (there being no Suspicion of Alteration in this Passage) one will be hard put to it to get over this Point. And the more, when we consider St. *Ambrose* read the *Vulgar Latin* as we now find it; St. *Jerome* found it so, and by not altering, must be deemed to have approved and confirmed it: And what is more than that, St. *Austin* collated St. *Jerome's* Edition with the *Greek*, approved of it, and declared he found scarce any Slip, or what he could reprehend in the whole.

Here is the Authority of both the *African* and *Roman* Churches, and from such Hands, at that Time, as may seem to be equivalent, in a Testimony of this Nature, to all the other Parts of the *Catholic Church* of the same Time. It is true, St. *Austin* calls this Edition the *Gospel*: But it is plain, he understood by that general Name the whole New Testament: For St. *Jerome* took it, in his Answer to that Father's

Letter of Approbation, and calls it his Emendation of the New Testament, for which St. *Austin* had commended him. This, with St. *Jerome's* Testimony above-recited, prevents all Exception to this Article.

Sixthly, It is farther considerable, that this Reading in the *Vulgate* has been received and confirmed, after all the Revisals of the *Western Church*; which implies, that they took it for the genuine Reading, and were not acquainted with any *Greek Manuscripts*, which they esteemed of sufficient Authority for altering the Reading.

Seventhly, As to the Truth of *Hincmar's* Relation, whether taken from *Liberatus*, and with what Foundation, I shall determine nothing. If true, it bears hard upon our Text; if false, the Matter is not greatly mended: We cannot get clear off, there are so many Rubs in the Way. However, thus much one may observe, that there had been no Colour for such a Story, if the Author had not known that OC was then the common Reading; and one cannot well suppose him ignorant how the *Greek Text* was then generally read in his Part of the World. This will hold both of *Liberatus* and *Hincmar*, especially the former. Nay, *Hincmar's* Words are express, that OC was the Reading in his Time, in the Manuscripts of his Acquaintance, and imply that that was the authentic Reading in his Opinion.

To conclude, Sir, I never considered any Thing that left me so much in Doubt as this, there being so much to be offered on both Sides, seemingly of equal Weight. But tho' I cannot declare for either Side

Side, I am inclined to believe Θεός¹ was early in the Text ; but whether it might not be slipt in from the Margin, where it had been put by Way of Explication, and thus, either with the Article or Relative, or perhaps both, caused this Confusion ; I cannot resolve with myself what to think.

If it could be made out that the *Alexandrine* read Θεός originally ; that the *Syriac* Manuscripts declare for it ; and that the *Ethiopic* Version, in Use in the *Abyssinian* Church ; if of equal Antiquity with their other Version now with us ; if that support the Reading, I should be induced to give my Hand.

Such an Inquiry would be of great Use ; but the Procurement of the *Ethiopic* would be of more Consequence than all the rest ; for if that declared for Θεός, I should not doubt of the *Alexandrine*.

I think I have now been as particular in every Article, as your Letter seems to require. If any Thing still farther material shall occur to you on the Subject, the Communication of it will be a Pleasure to,

S I R,

Your obedient humble Servant.

¹ I am now inclined to think that θ has been early prefixed to Θεός in the Text, and, by different transcribing, by Abbreviation or otherwise, the Copies have been propagated with θ, θ^s, OC or ΘC, as it happened, whence the following Discrepance may be well accounted for ; and that the confused Account of *Macedonius* must relate to his altering one of these Readings ; if one can understand any Thing by it.

However it be, all the antient Versions must have been made from Copies that had the Relative only ; and the several Churches, which used them, must be supposed to know of no better or truer Reading.

*** I shall make no Apology for publishing, on this Occasion, the following Letter, after the very Reverend and worthy Author's Death, since it is for the Sake of communicating the Particulars and Hints therein contained; which may, and we hope will thereby be made good Use of for the public Benefit.

S I R,

Windsor, May 31, 1734.

OUR S of the 23d Instant came to Hand on the 29th. I was very glad to know by it, whom I had been obliged to for a Volume of curious and useful Pieces, that I might return the Author, which I do, my most hearty Thanks for them.

I was lately at *Cambridge* for a few Days.—But it may probably be six Months before I see it again; otherwise I should be ready to serve you there in any Way that I could, with respect either to searching Libraries for you, or assisting you in what concerns your Degree. I apprehend you might, with Leave from your own College, enter your self in any^m other, and bringing the proper Certificates of your Standing, have a Doctor of Laws Degree, either keeping the Exercises required, or cautioning for the same.

As to searching Libraries, I cannot think of a more proper Person to do it for you, than Mr. C. Fellow of——, an excellent Scholar in all Parts of Learning, and particularly studious in the *Oriental* Way. If you make Use of my Name to him, I am sure, he will gladly oblige you.

* * * *

It is a great Misfortune upon many very studious and valuable Men, who spend their whole Time in
meriting

^m This relates to some hard (they had Reason to call it unfair) Treatment about a Fellowship, because of several Anticipations in that respect, which deprived the Author and his Competitors of a common Benefit and Preferment, to which they were intitled in their Course, by a regular Election.

meriting the best Preferments, while others run away with the Prize, by being forward, * * * *

You have several excellent Plans on Foot, in which I heartily wish you Health and Success. But in order thereto, they must be brought within a practicable Compass. And when I say practicable, I mean as much as Health, and Avocations, and Distance from Libraries will permit, and the World will encourage and accept. All Kinds of Learning lie under some Discouragement at present, and have so for some Time, in the same Proportion as Party-Zeal has been growing. The Booksellers will scarce undertake a *Latin* Book, (unless it be for the Use of Schools) much less *Greek* or *Oriental*: They are not fitted for the Taste of the Age. And there is sometimes so much soliciting, courting, and apologizing required for procuring Subscriptions, that an ingenuous Mind almost disdains to go through it.

However, let not these Things discourage you from going on with your laudable Undertakings: Times may mend. Or if not, you have your present Reward in improving yourself, and cannot fail of a future for labouring to improve the World.

I very much approve of your Design in attempting, as far as may be, a Reconciliation of the *Hebrew* and *Septuagint*. I have often expressed my Wishes, that somebody would write running critical Notes upon the *Septuagint* all the Way, accounting for the real or seeming Deviations from the *Hebrew*. A Gentleman hearing me speak of it, immediately told me, that Mr. ***** had done it. Whereupon, I took the first Opportunity of intruding myself into Mr. *****'s Acquaintance. I found he had written five
or

or six Quarto Volumes, which he shew'd me in Manuscript, and told me they had cost him twelve Years in compiling, in the younger or middle Part of his Life. I begg'd him to revise and publish, promising to use all possible Pains in procuring Subscriptions. I could not prevail. He said, his Work was not perfect, and he was too old now to give it his finishing Hand. He is about seventy. So I fear his twelve Years useful Labours, and many considerable Improvements, will be lost. His Work will die with him. I dare not ask him to leave his Manuscripts behind him, though in ever so safe Hands. I could make no Judgment of Particulars, having never perused the Work. But I liked his General Plan, which was to steer evenly between *Buxtorff's* Stiffness and *Capellus's* Latitude.

I have sometimes wish'd that a convenient Number of good Hands would contribute their joint Endeavours to make our *English* Version as perfect as can be made. In order thereto, according to my moderate Attainments, I have noted down, in an interleaved *English* Bible, such Alterations, as upon reading the Original, and Versions, and Criticks, appear'd to me necessary or proper. I recommended the same Design to—(*several Gentlemen of Note here named*) entreating them to make their Entries, at Leisure, in a like interleaved Bible: And if seven Years hence (whoever lives to that Time) half a Dozen or more such interleaved Bibles, with Corrections entered, should be compared, there might perhaps out of all be compiled a more perfect Version than ever yet appeared, or is ever likely to appear in any other Way. Where they happen to differ, let a Majority decide, whose Correction shall be taken in. I take Leave to hint the same Thing to you. It may be made a Bye-Work, and not interfere with other Employ. And

if nothing comes of it in the Upshot, yet the Time will be usefully laid out by every Clergyman concerned in it; as it will prepare him for descanting the more judiciously upon Scripture, as Occasion offers.

Another Thing I have much wish'd for, is a more compleat Commentary upon the New Testament, between the Dryness of *Hammond*, and the Diffuseness, and sometimes Looseness, of *Whitby*. *****

We want a more correct and accurate Performance; and such a Work would sell. Great Improvements might be made from occasional Hints to be found among Criticks, who have written Dissertations on particular Texts; and *Wolffius*, by his References to such, in his *Curæ Philologicæ et Criticæ* has made it easy to find them out.

I have expressed myself thus freely to you, in Testimony of the great Esteem I have for you: And if I am any way capable of forwarding your good and great Designs, I shall always be glad to hear from you. I am,

S I R,

With very hearty Esteem,

Your obliged humble Servant.

20 JY 64

Ready, and Intended for the Press,

A CONSPECTUS, or Collective View of the Author's Plan and Design in a proposed Edition of the *Ethiopic* Version of the Holy Scriptures, with a Reconciliation and Settling of the *Hebrew* and *Greek* Texts, &c. With occasional Observations intermixed, of a Religious and Commercial Import; opening an inviting Prospect of promoting, by the same Means, the mutual Interests of Religion and Commerce, in such Foreign Parts as are herein humbly recommended to Consideration: Adding some Queries and Reflections on the Necessity of Communion with the Catholic Church, and wherein that Communion consists.

The Society *de Propaganda Fide*, at *Rome*, have lately encouraged a very promising Proposal or Invitation from the same Quarter, nearly on the same Account; which I should hope might be turned to a more general Benefit.

The Author's Scheme and Proposals would have been communicated there, and elsewhere abroad, with his Book, above twenty Years ago, if it could have been printed as he intended; of which Disappointment he has already given Account.

Ready and Intended for the Press.

A CONSPECTUS, or Collective View of the Author's Plan and Design in a proposed Edition of the Ethiopic Version of the Holy Scriptures, with a Reconciliation and Settling of the various and Greek Texts, &c. With occasional Observations intermixed, of a Religious and Commercial Import, opening an inviting Prospect of promoting, by the same Means, the mutual Interests of Christian and Commerce, in such Foreign Parts as are therein mutually recommended to Consideration: Adding some Queries and Reflections on the Necessity of Communion with the Catholic Church, and wherein that Communion consists.

The Society of Friends, at the same time, have lately encouraged a very becoming report of Invitation from the same Quarter, nearly on the same Account; which I should hope might be turned to a more general Benefit.

The Author's Scheme and Proposals would have been communicated there, and elsewhere abroad, with his Book, above twenty Years ago, if it could have been printed as he intended; of which Disappointment he has already given Account.

